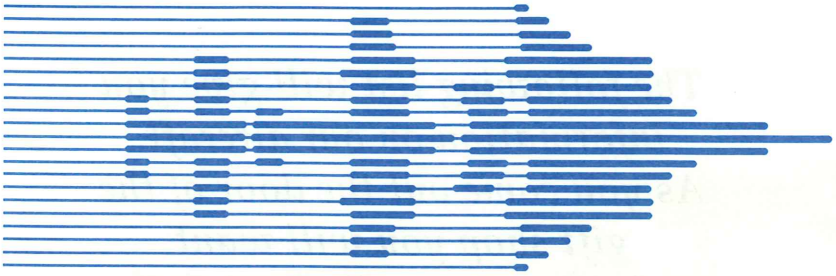
Welcome

to the

Castle Air Museum



Visitors Guide

Administration: (209) 723-2178
Gift Shop: (209) 723-2182
Flight of Fancy Grill: (209) 723-2177
Email: cam@elite.net • www.elite.net/castle-air
5050 Santa Fe Drive
Atwater, California 95301

Hours of Operation
May through September • 9 AM to 5 PM daily
October through April • 10 AM to 4 PM daily
Closed
New Year's Day • Easter • Thanksgiving • Christmas

Our mission is to preserve military aviation heritage for current and future generations

The following list will give you information on our aircraft. As you come out the door of the gift shop you will want to begin your walk through the outdoor displays to your left.

For everyone's safety and to preserve the aircraft display areas, we ask that you remain outside the chained area and off the red rock. Please don't pull or swing on chain fences.

CASTLE AIR MUSEUM BACKGROUND

Castle Air Museum opened in 1981 to pay tribute to the significant role military aviation has played in the defense of the free world. Today the Museum has evolved into an exciting destination for families, history buffs, aviation enthusiasts – anyone who wants an educational and entertaining stroll through the past.

Currently there are over 40 restored aircraft on the Museum grounds which encompass flying history from WWII to the present. The aircraft displayed at Castle Air Museum are as much a part of America's heritage as Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. These flying testimonials have survived neglect and the salvage torch and remain as a history lesson to all who believe in freedom and democracy.

Castle Air Museum boasts a varied collection of grand old warbirds. The B-25 medium range bomber is best known for its use in the one way "Jimmy Doolittle raid" on Tokyo, retaliation for the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The "workhorse" of the WWII airwar in Europe, our B-17 Flying Fortress, stands proudly on Museum grounds. "Faster than a speeding bullet", the SR-71 strategic reconnaissance aircraft is the fastest aircraft in the world today. It evokes the eerie world of spy planes and the Cold War.

The outdoor exhibit sits on eleven acres of land and is complemented by the Indoor Museum, which houses a fascinating collection of wartime and aviation memorabilia. The Flight of Fancy Grill offers a varied lunch menu with a relaxing outdoor patio eating area available. Museum visitors can purchase aircraft models, clothing, books, videos and souvenirs from the unique collection offered in the gift shop.

The challenge of finding, restoring, maintaining and displaying these aircraft is awesome. Often an aircraft is acquired in pieces, salvaged from diverse locations in ragged condition, shipped to Atwater and then under the direction of knowledgeable volunteers, lovingly restored. Through the enthusiasm and generosity of dedicated volunteers Castle Air Museum has evolved into a premier showcase of vintage war birds and military memorabilia. Our volunteers are young and old, aviation buffs and aviation novices, local business people and retired Air Force personnel and they contribute their time as restorers, tour guides, docents and other diverse Museum functionaries.

1. Consolidated B-24M Liberator
(Bomber)...This version was the last produced by Consolidated Aircraft. The B-24 was the only combat aircraft to serve in every theater of operations in World War II. More Liberators (18,481) were built than any military aircraft in history. B-24s were built in 5 plants, with over 8,000 built by Ford at Willow Run, Michigan. They equipped 45 bombardment groups plus several special squadrons in 1944-45. Fully loaded with 8,800 lbs. of bombs, they could fly 1,590 miles with maximum speed of 290 mph and reach 28,000 ft. Most were out of service by the end of 1945. The Indian Air Force used Liberators received from the RAF in maritime patrol service into the 1970s. Our B-24 carries the markings of the 329th Bomb. Squadron, 93rd Bomb. Group, 8th Air Force.

2. Boeing KC-97 StratoFreighter
(Tanker)...Originally designed in 1943 as a cargo version of the B-29/B-50, a flying boom and tanks in the fuselage were added and it became an in-flight refueler. Only 74 cargo variants were built while 816 were tankers. It was capable of offloading 15,000 gallons of fuel. Jet engines were added on the outboard wings to enable it to operate from shorter runways with a full load. This aircraft saw service with the Strategic Air Command and, after the jets were added, with several Air National Guard units before being retired in 1977. It was retrieved from an Air Forces storage facility in Arizona, restored to flying condition and flown here to join the museum collection. A civilian version, the Stratocruiser, was used by several airlines, including Pan Am, Northwest and BOAC.

3. Douglas B-23 Dragon
(Bomber)...Built in 1939, it started life as a modified B-18 Bolo. With refinements made in the fuselage and tail and more powerful engines, it became the first American bomber to have a tail gun. It was also armed with 3 additional guns and could carry 2 tons of bombs. It was considered obsolete by the time it first flew and only 38 aircraft were built. Most were used in anti-submarine patrol or were designated as UC-67 and converted to transports with up to 12 passengers and a crew of 3. This one had an effective career as a bomber of only 2 years, July 1940 to August 1942.

4. Avro Vulcan B.Mk 2
(Bomber)...During post W.W.II modernization, Britain wanted an aircraft with speed, altitude and bomb-carrying ability equal to anything in existence. The Vulcan went in to operation in 1952 and flew with the RAF until the 1980s, when it was replaced by the European-built Tornado. This is the second version, which became operational in 1960. The first bomber to use the delta wing, it had a maximum speed of 640 mph, ceiling of 65,000 ft, range of 4,600 miles and bomb load of 21,000 lbs. They were used in the Falklands war of 1982 and for a time held the record of the longest bombing raid in history. (Eclipsed during Operation Desert Storm in 1991.) Some Vulcans were converted for strategic reconnaissance. This aircraft arrived here in 1981 and is on indefinite loan to the museum courtesy of Her Majesty's Government.

5. North American B-45A Tornado (Bomber)...The B-45 was the first jet bomber put into production. It was designed to replace the W. W. II B-25s and B-26s. It served only from 1948 to 1958. This display aircraft was the eighth production Tornado and holds the distinction of being the oldest jet in the Museum. After serving in the USAF, this plane was used by the Navy as a drone controller, and later as a photographic ground target at the China Lake Naval Weapons Center where it was recovered in pieces and restored here at Castle.

6. Avro-Canada CF-100 Mk V Canuck (Fighter)...A long range, all-weather interceptor, the CF-100 was the first aircraft entirely designed and built in Canada. One of the largest fighters ever built, the Royal Canadian Air Force used it to defend against a trans-polar bomber attack. It was first produced in 1950 and by the 1970s was used to simulate enemy attacks and thus served to test North American air defenses. The last ones were retired in 1981. This one was flown to Castle in January of 1982 and was a gift of the Canadian government.

7. Lockheed Lodestar... This aircraft is one of 29 Model 18 Lodestars ordered by South African Airways in the late 1930s. War broke out before they were delivered in 1940-41 and all but one went straight to the South African Air Force where they were used as intermediate range personnel transports, carrying 14 passengers and a crew of 3. The Lodestars were assigned to 5 Wing based at Air Force Station Germiston. It was returned to South African Airways in 1944, registered as ZS-ASU and named "Piet Retief". It was withdrawn from SAA service in October 1950 and sold to East African Airways. The USAAF operated Lodestars during World War II, some taken over from civil airlines as C-56 and C-57, some purchased new as C-60s. The U. S. Navy also purchased some under the designation R-5O. Our aircraft displays W. W. II markings of the South African Air Force.

8. Kawasaki KAQ-1 Drone...Produced in the 1950s, this is a radio controlled unmanned miniature aircraft. It was launched from a ramp and recovered by parachute. It was used as a target for anti-aircraft gunners and air-to-air missile training. It was also used for atmospheric research and reconnaissance.

9. McDonnell F-101 Voodoo (Fighter)...Developed as a long-range fighter to escort B-36 bombers to and from the target. After entering service in 1957, the aircraft set a number of speed and point to point records. It became known as the "One-Oh-Wonder". The reconnaissance version (RF-101) was used in the Cuban missile crisis and extensively in Vietnam with their speed of nearly Mach 2 helping them survive over enemy territory. Armed with Genie air-to-air missiles, they worked in the North American Air Defense Command also. This aircraft was retired in 1982 and is painted in the colors of the 84th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, which served here at Castle.

10. Beech C-45 Expediter (Cargo, Trainer)...Built as the D-18 light commercial transport in 1940. Of the 4,500 built for the USAAF by 1945, 1,400 were built exclusively for transport use. Other versions included the AT-7 for navigation training, the AT-11 for bombardier and weapons training and the F-2 for photo reconnaissance. It is powered by two 450 hp Pratt-Whitney engines and had a maximum speed of 220 mph. It was also used by the Navy as the JRB (C-45) and SNB (AT-7/11). Our C-45 came from the Department of Agriculture.

11. DeHavilland-Canada L-20 Beaver (U-6) (Utility)... Originally designed as a utility aircraft for service in Canada's rugged north, this plane was valued by both the U. S. Army and Air Force. The U.S purchased some 980. It could be fitted with skis or with floats and was used for observation and light transport duties. Though not very fast (155mph maximum), they were quick to get off the ground. A fully loaded L-20 could clear a 50-ft. obstacle while using only 1200 feet of runway. Ours came from the Department of Agriculture.

12. Cessna O-2A Super Skymaster (Observer)...In 1967 the USAF needed a twin-engine forward observation aircraft in Vietnam. Cessna proposed its civilian model 337, then in production. Modifications for the military included pylons for smoke rockets, a smoke generator to make it more visible and a loud speaker for use in psychological warfare. This "A" version was used to locate enemy ground positions and downed American airmen. The pilot was a "forward air controller" who could call in fighter-bombers to hit the target he designated.

13. Republic F-105 Thunderchief (Fighter)...Developed to meet Air Force requirements for a supersonic single-seat fighter-bomber able to deliver heavy loads of conventional bombs and rockets and nuclear weapons at high speeds over long ranges, the F-105 (popularly known as "Thud", "Lead Sled") ended up as the heaviest single-seat fighter ever. It first flew in 1955 and played a vital role in Vietnam. The majority of all bombing of North Vietnam's most heavily defended targets was carried out by F-105s. They flew 101,000 strike missions and dropped 202,596 tons of bombs. This aircraft finished its service with the Utah Air National Guard and flew to retirement here in 1981.

14. Lockheed F-104B Starfighter (Fighter)...Frequently described as the "Missile with a Man In It"; the F-104 was a high performance airplane. It was an extremely "hot" and unforgiving aircraft. It was the first operational fighter capable of sustained speeds above Mach 2 and the first to hold the world speed and altitude records simultaneously. The Air Force used only 296 of the 2,536 built, with the rest being used or built under license by Germany, Italy, Japan, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Norway, Spain, Taiwan, Jordan, Pakistan and Turkey. The last Air National Guard Starfighters were retired in 1975. A number were converted to drones. This aircraft is a two-seat version; only 26 were built, all others were single-seat.

15. Cessna U-3A "Blue Canoe" (Utility)...An "off-the-shelf" civilian Cessna 310, these were used for executive transport (up to four passengers) and to haul light cargo between military bases. Ours came from the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station Aero Club.

16. Kaman HH-43B Huskie (Helicopter)...This was used for base crash rescue for all flying commands. A Huskie crew could get airborne in one minute, taking 30 seconds to get airborne and 30 seconds to pick up the fire suppression pod. The twin intermeshing, counter-rotating rotors made the aircraft stable in flight and the downwash actually helped suppress fires. A later version, the HH-43F, was used for a time in Vietnam to rescue downed airmen until it was replaced by the larger, faster HH-3. This one served at Eglin AFB, Florida and Kirtland AFB, New Mexico.

17. Beech YT-34 Mentor (Trainer)...This aircraft was a primary pilot trainer replacement for the T-6 Texan. Beginning in the early 1950s, it was used by both the USAF and the USN. It is an excellent aerobatic aircraft and can be seen at airshows. This plane saw service at three bases in Texas: Randolph, Goodfellow and James Connally. It had a maximum speed of 191 mph and ceiling of 20,000 ft. Some Navy T-34s were converted to more powerful turboprop engines, improving performance.

18. Curtiss C-46D Commando (Cargo)...Best remembered for their service in Asia during W.W.II, these aircraft carried cargo over the Himalayas between India and China. It could carry up to 50 troops or 15,000 pounds of cargo. Each time an aircraft flew "the Hump" its ground crew painted a camel on its nose. This C-46 flew 45 missions "over the Hump". After W.W.II, it was turned over to the Japanese Home Guard. It was flown back to the US in 1970; donated to the museum in 1984.

19. Douglas C-47 Skytrain (Cargo)...Commonly referred to as the "Gooney Bird", the C-47 was adapted from the Douglas DC-3 commercial airliner and used to carry personnel and cargo, tow gliders and drop paratroopers. It served everywhere there were U. S. forces in World War II. Having great longevity, it was also used in Korea and Vietnam, where it took on an additional role as an attack aircraft, with three 7.62mm gatling guns, known as "Puff the Magic Dragon". It was called the Dakota by the RAF, which used them into the 1970s. C-47s were used extensively in the early stages of the Berlin airlift. It could carry 27 troops or 10,000 pounds of cargo.

20. P-80B (F-80B) Shooting Star (Fighter)...The P-80 recorded a number of firsts. It was the first Air Force aircraft to exceed 500 mph in level flight, the first American jet airplane to be manufactured in large quantities and the first Air Force jet to be used in combat. In 1943, Lockheed was invited to design an airplane around the British Halford H-1 turbojet newly developed in Britain. A design team led by Clarence "Kelly" Johnson, who also designed the U-2 and SR-71, completed the project and the

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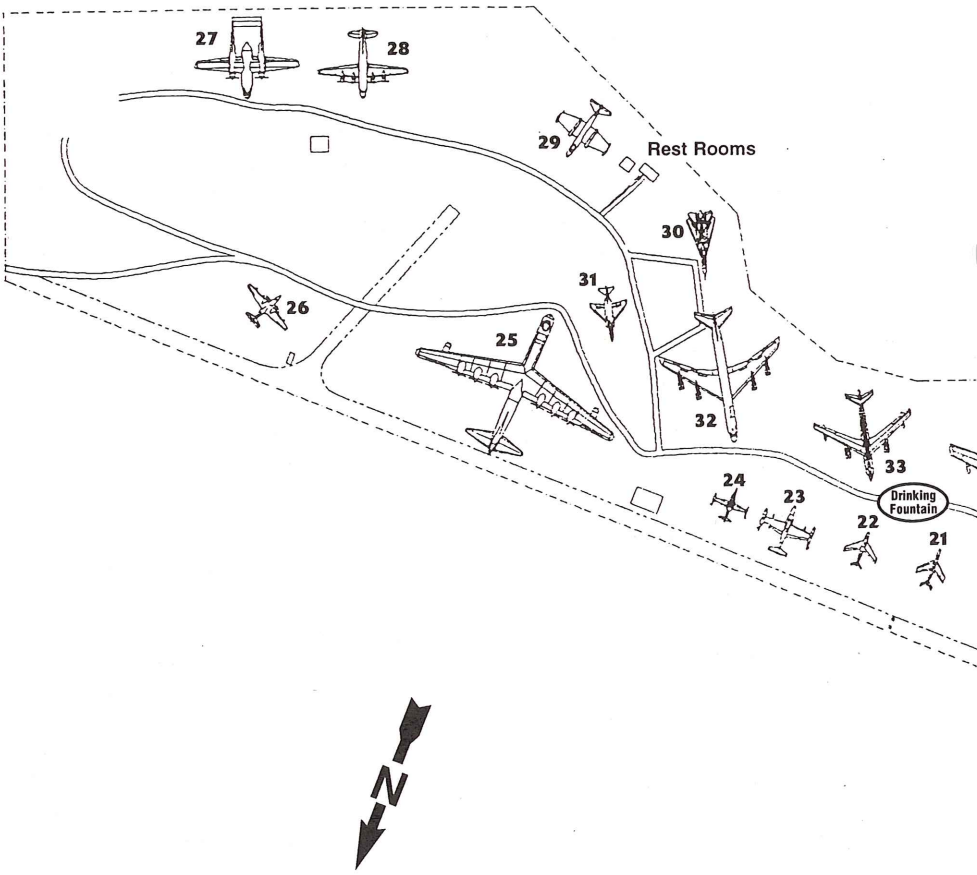

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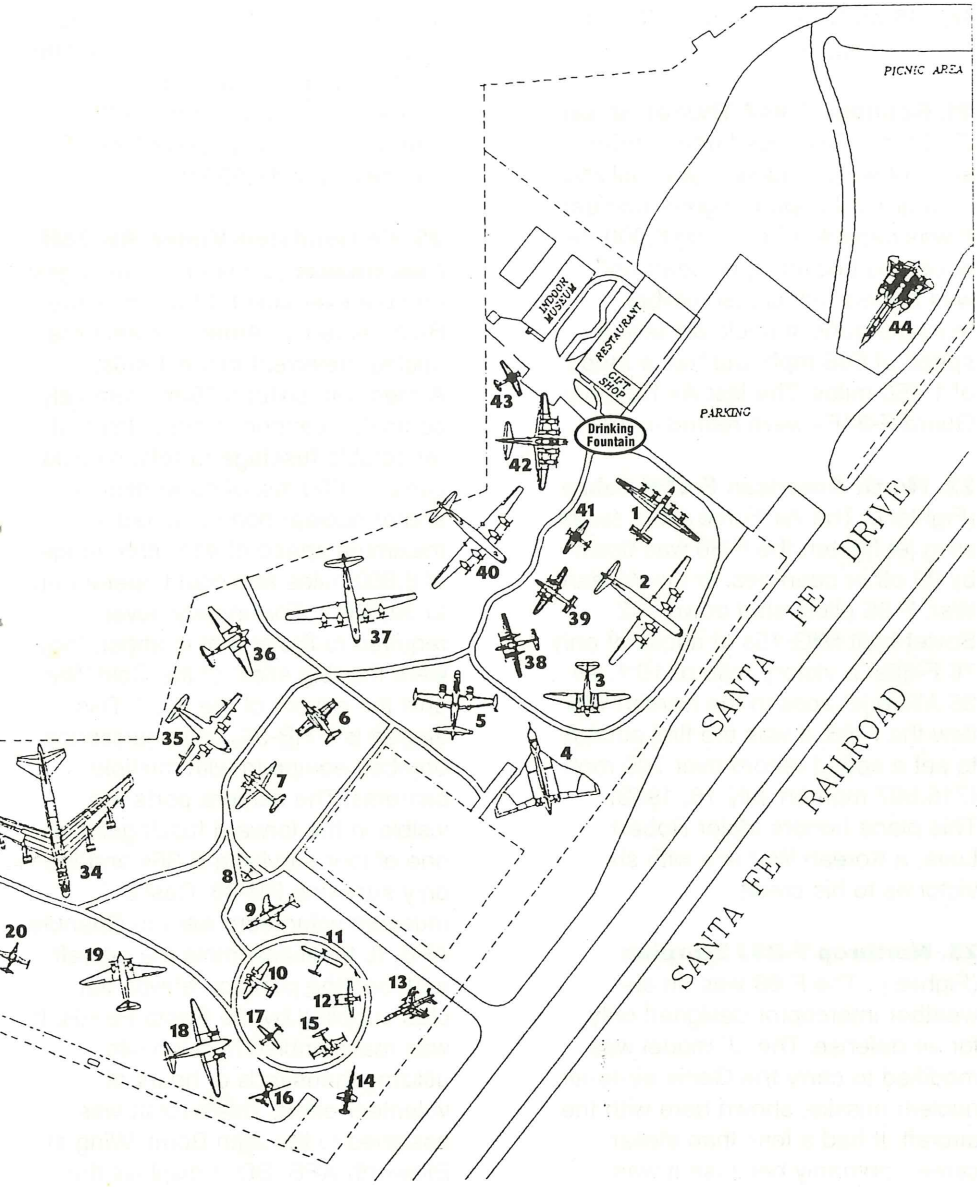
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prototype flew in 143 days. Production aircraft used the GE J-33 engine. It was used extensively in Korea as a fighter-bomber. This plane carries the markings of Lt. Russell Brown, who shot down a Mig-15 on November 8, 1950 — the first jet-to-jet kill.

21. Republic F-84F Thunderstreak (Fighter)...Developed from earlier straight-wing models, it was utilized as a ground-support fighter-bomber. It was capable of carrying 6,000 lbs. of bombs (including nuclear) and was armed with six .50 caliber machine guns. It could achieve a speed of 685 mph and had a range of 1,650 miles. The last Air National Guard F-84Fs were retired in 1971.

22. North American F-86H Sabre (Fighter)...The Air Force's first swept wing jet fighter, the F-86 was flown by 20 other countries. In the Korean War, F-86 pilots shot down 792 Soviet-built MIG-15s at a loss of only 76 F-86s, a victory ratio of 10:1. All 36 Allied jet aces in the Korean War flew the F-86. It was the first aircraft to set a speed record over 700 mph (715.697 mph on July 16, 1953). This plane honors Major Robert Love, a Korean War ace with six victories to his credit.

23. Northrop F-89J Scorpion (Fighter)...The F-89 was an all-weather interceptor designed only for air defense. The "J" model was modified to carry the Genie air-to-air nuclear missile, shown here with the aircraft. It had a less than stellar career, primarily because it was underpowered. Built in 1954, it was retired from active Air Force service in 1959. This aircraft flew with the Air National Guard in Wisconsin and Iowa and was retired in 1969.

24. Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star (Trainer)...The two-place T-33 was the world's first jet trainer. It was developed from the single-seat F-80 fighter by lengthening the fuselage three feet to accommodate the second cockpit. The air forces and navies of over 20 countries used the T-33. Untold thousands of pilots earned their wings on the T-33. It had a maximum speed of 525 mph and ceiling of 47,500 ft.

25. Consolidated-Vultee RB-36H Peacemaker (Bomber)...The largest bomber ever built (at the time), the B-36 served as America's airborne nuclear deterrent in the 1950s. Armed with sixteen 20mm remotely controlled cannon in nose, tail and retractable fuselage turrets, it could carry 72,000 lbs. of conventional and/or nuclear bombs. It had a maximum speed of 411 mph, range of 8,800 miles and could operate up to 39,000 ft. Fortunately never required to fire a shot in anger, they were the "big stick" of the Cold War until the advent of the B-52. This aircraft is a RB-36, reconnaissance bomber, equipped with multiple cameras. The camera ports are visible in the forward fuselage. It is one of four surviving B-36s and the only surviving RB-36. Castle museum volunteers went to Chanute AFB, IL to disassemble the aircraft and load the parts on eleven flat cars supplied by the Santa Fe RR. It was reassembled here on site, utilizing thousands of hours of volunteer effort. This aircraft was assigned to the 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth AFB, SD. It displays the markings of that unit.

26. Grumman SA-16 Albatross (Rescue Amphibian)...The Albatross was first produced for the U.S. Navy in late 1947 as the UF-1. A modified version appeared in 1955 as the UF-2. The USAF acquired 305 of them with the majority serving with the Air Rescue Service of MATS under the designation SA-16A with the UF-2 version designated SA-16B. It replaced the PBY-5A Catalina amphibian for air-sea rescue work. With the uniform designation of all U.S. military aircraft in 1962, the SA-16's became HU-16A and B. The type was also used by the U.S. Coast Guard. It could be equipped with four JATO bottles for takeoff assistance. A few Navy Albatrosses were equipped with skis for Antarctic service. (The landing gear could not be retracted when skis were fitted.) It has provisions for a crew of four plus 10 passengers or cargo. Most were phased out of service in the 1970s; some are still in use by foreign navies.

27. Fairchild C-119C Flying Boxcar (Cargo)...The C-119 was a major redesign of the Fairchild C-82 Packet, with more powerful engines and a larger cargo compartment. It features the same rear loading, straight through cargo area as the C-82. It could carry 45 paratroopers or 35 litters or up to 15,000 lbs. of cargo. C-119s saw extensive service in the Korean War, flying from bases in Japan. They also were used to transport supplies to the Arctic for the construction of the "DEW Line" chain of air defense radar stations. Some were modified with an upward-hinged beaver tail cargo door and designated C-119J. Some of these modified aircraft were used for midair retrieval of imagery packages from orbiting Corona satellites using a "trapeze" apparatus suspended from the open rear cargo door. In 1966, 26 C-119Gs and 26 C-119Ks were modified as gunships designated as AC-119s and used in the Vietnam War. C-119s were also used by the U. S. Navy, the Marines, Italy, Belgium and India. The last C-119 was retired from Air Force service in 1975. Our C-119 served with a Troop Carrier Group in Germany, then with the Air National Guard until it was retired. It was transferred to the U. S. Forest Service after retirement from the Air Force and was used as a fire-fighting borate bomber. While in that service, it had a small turbojet engine fitted on top of the center fuselage.

28. Douglas R5D-4 Skymaster (Cargo)...Original design was started in 1939 as the DC-4 for the airlines. The first batch was commandeered off the assembly line in 1942 and redesignated C-54. C-54s were first delivered to the Army Air Forces in March 1942. They saw service in every theater and were the primary airlifter across the Atlantic and Pacific, making nearly 80,000 crossings with the loss of only 3 aircraft. 201 C54s were delivered to the Navy as R5D Navy Transports. The Presidential version was a C-54 outfitted with a hydraulic elevator for President Franklin Roosevelt and nicknamed the "Sacred Cow". The Berlin Airlift of 1948-49 used 319 of the approximately 400 C-54s to haul supplies to the city when the Russians closed road and rail access to the city. Our aircraft, which was assigned to Navy Transport

Squadron VR-8, was one of those used. Over 189,000 flights were made in the 15 months of the lift, delivering 2.3 million tons of food, fuel and supplies. C-54s served until 1972.

29. Martin EB-57A Canberra (Bomber) ...The Canberra was designed by English Electric Co. as a light tactical bomber for the Royal Air Force. Built under license by Martin, the US version is the only non-US design adopted for operational service since W.W.II. B-57s were sent to Vietnam in 1965 and used for daylight bombing, night interdiction and reconnaissance missions. This aircraft was equipped for electronic reconnaissance and so designated as an EB-57. The Air National Guard operated EB-57s until 1982.

30. General Dynamics FB-111 Aardvark (Fighter-Bomber)...The F-111 was the first operational Air Force aircraft to have variable geometry or swing-wings. The wings could be extended for take-off, landing and slow speed flight or swept back, as seen on our aircraft, for high-speed flight. It was equipped with terrain following radar and could operate at supersonic speeds at extremely low altitude. It could carry two Short-Range Attack Missiles in its weapons bay and up to four SRAMs externally on the wings or 31,500 lbs. of conventional bombs. In 1986, F-111 crews stationed at RAF Lakenheath, UK, along with Navy A-6 Intruder crews, staged a retaliatory strike on Libya in response to Libyan-sponsored terrorism. F-111s were retired in 1996.

31. McDonnell F-4E Phantom II (Fighter)...The F-4 was the dominant Air Force fighter of the 1960s and early 1970s and was the tactical workhorse in Vietnam. It was originally designed as a Navy fighter. The Air Force adopted it in 1962. Air Force Phantoms retained the folding wings and tail hook of the Navy aircraft. Our aircraft was an actual member of the USAF "Thunderbird" aerial demonstration team and is painted accordingly. The Thunderbirds present precision aerial maneuvers to exhibit the capabilities of high-performance aircraft. The F-4 carried air-to-air missiles, was armed with a 20mm cannon and could carry up to 16,000 lbs. of external weapons. It had a maximum speed of 1,500 mph, range of 1,050 miles and ceiling of 57,200 ft. All of the Air Force aces and Navy aces of the Vietnam War flew F-4s.

32. Boeing KC-135A Stratotanker (Tanker)...Although similar in size and appearance to the Boeing 707 airliner, the KC-135 was designed primarily for aerial refueling. The first one entered service at Castle AFB in 1957. All KC-135 crew training took place at Castle until the base was closed. This plane arrived at Castle in October 1957 and flew its last mission on January 27, 1993. It is a veteran of Vietnam and Desert Storm. Its nose art designates it as "The City of Atwater", reflecting the support given the museum and Castle AFB by the local community. This aircraft carried about 31,200 gallons of jet fuel in the "wet" wings and tanks in the lower fuselage. KC-135s that remain in service have been equipped with more powerful

engines and updated avionics and systems and are planned to continue in service past 2020.

33. Boeing B-47 Stratojet
(Bomber)...B-47s formed the backbone of the Strategic Air Command in the mid-1950s. It was the world's first swept-wing bomber and the first to use a bicycle arrangement for the landing gear, necessitated by the thin wings. By mid 1957, 28 bomb wings were flying 1,260 B-47s; another 800 reconnaissance and training versions were in use. This display aircraft was retired in 1964 and transferred to the Navy for use as a photo-training target at China Lake Naval Weapons Center. It was there that museum volunteers spent over 36,000 man-hours restoring it to flyable condition. In 1986 it flew to Castle, the last flight ever of a B-47.

34. Boeing B-52D Stratofortress
(Bomber)...The B-52 was for a time the largest, heaviest aircraft ever flown. It came into its own in the Vietnam War. Equipped with ground-mapping radar and able to carry 84 internal and 24 external 500/700 lb. bombs, it wreaked havoc in North Vietnam. This aircraft was stationed at Utapao Royal Thai AB, where it carried out bombing missions against North Vietnam. By the end of the war, 31 B-52s were lost, 15 of them during Operation Linebacker during December 1972. The "D" model was produced in 1956 and phased out in 1983, along with the tail gunner position. Later model B-52s were effective against Iraqi forces in Desert Storm. 94 B-52Hs have been updated and continue in service with both active and reserve units.

35. Fairchild C-123K Provider
(Cargo)...It was originally designed as a glider, although the design provided for it eventually being powered. A tactical transport, it was a versatile aircraft able to be converted in a short time to a troop transport carrying 61 troops, medevac transport with 50 litters, or freighter carrying 15,000 lbs. of cargo. It was used extensively in Vietnam, hauling all kinds of cargo including live animals; used for defoliation missions; two examples were converted for night interdiction. Two small jet engines could be attached underwing near the external tanks; the attachment points are visible on our aircraft. This type was also flown by five other countries and by Air America, the CIA's covert transport operation.

36. Douglas B-18 Bolo
(Bomber)...This aircraft was developed to replace the Martin B-10 and was based on the Douglas DC-2 commercial transport. It competed with an early version of the Boeing B-17 and won out. By 1939 it was considered to be underpowered, to have inadequate defensive armament and carried too small a bomb load. Some were destroyed at Pearl Harbor and in 1942 were relegated to anti-submarine or transport duty. A B-18 was the first American aircraft to sink a U-boat. This is the oldest aircraft in the museum collection, built in 1938.

37. Boeing WB-50 Superfortress (Bomber/Reconnaissance). In the late 1940s, a significantly modified version of the B-29 was developed and designated B-50. One of the B-50s, nicknamed "Lucky Lady II" made the first non-stop flight around the world, departing westward from Carswell AFB, Texas and returning 94 hours 1 minute later having flown 23,452 miles. The B-50 was the last propeller-driven bomber delivered to the USAF. After being replaced by B-47s, they were relegated to other duties. This aircraft was assigned to a Weather Reconnaissance Squadron at McClellan AFB, Sacramento, where it performed weather tracking and atmospheric sampling after Soviet nuclear weapons tests. B-50s served until 1964.

38. Douglas A-26B Invader (Bomber-Ground Attack)...A follow-on to the Douglas A-20 light bomber, the A-26 saw limited combat in Europe in late 1944-early 1945. Redesignated B-26 in 1948, it was the only attack bomber available for the Korean War where it was heavily used. Some B-26s were part of the initial group of aircraft sent to Vietnam as part of Operation Farm Gate in the early 1960s. Its last combat mission was in 1969. This display aircraft was in the USAF inventory from May 1945 to August 1957.

39. North American B-25J Mitchell (Bomber)...Produced from 1939 to 1945, over 11,000 were built; 9,816 of these served with US forces. They saw combat in every theater except with the 8th and 9th Air Forces in the European theater. B-25Hs armed with a 75mm cannon and 14 machine guns were very effective in the anti-shipping role in the Pacific. B-25Bs were used for the first bombing raid on Japan, April 18, 1942, commanded by then-Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle. Sixteen B-25's flew from the 450-ft. deck of the USS Hornet and bombed four Japanese cities, including Tokyo. Ours was flown from storage in 1980 and General Doolittle was here to greet it when it landed.

40. Boeing B-29 Superfortress (Bomber)...The B-29 was the first bomber with pressurized crew compartments. They were used primarily in the Pacific Theater where their long range was needed. Two B-29s, the Enola Gay and Bockscar, were the only aircraft to drop atomic weapons in wartime. This was in August 1945, precipitating Japan's surrender the following month. B-29s based on Okinawa and in Japan also served in the Korean War. This aircraft was built from three derelict targets at China Lake. It carries the Korean War era markings of the 28th Bomb. Squadron, 19th Bomb. Group, based on Okinawa.

41. Vultee BT-13 Valiant (Trainer)...Nicknamed the "Vultee Vibrator", this aircraft was flown during the second phase of pilot training by almost all Army Air Corps and Navy pilots during World War II. This was the first aircraft used at Merced Army Air Field, which was renamed Castle AFB. It was also used at several other pilot-training fields in the San Joaquin Valley.

42. Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress (Bomber)...Probably Boeing's most famous bomber, the B-17 flew mostly out of England, equipping 26 of the 40 bombardment groups of the 8th Air Force. Six B-17 groups were assigned to the 15th Air Force, based in Italy. It will be forever associated with the Allied effort to defeat Nazi Germany. Until the advent of long-range fighter escort, many were shot down on daylight bombing missions over Germany. General Frederick W. Castle, for whom the base was named, was shot down in a B-17 while leading the 8th Air Force on 24 December 1944. The aircraft was heavily damaged by fighter attack. He refused to jettison the bombs as the formation was over territory held by our forces. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor (posthumously). Our B-17 last flew as a borate bomber at Tulare. It carries the W.W.II markings of the 94th Bombardment Group, 3rd Air Division, and 8th Air Force.

43. North American AT-6 Texan (Trainer)...Thousands of pilots in the Army Air Forces and Navy, plus the British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Air Forces trained in the AT-6. 15,109 of them were built, more than any other trainer. It was called the Harvard in British service and the Wirraway in Australia. In the Korean War, T-6s were used as forward air control aircraft, armed with smoke rockets to designate targets and carrying an observer to assist the pilot. The T-6 lasted long beyond W.W.II and was eventually used by many nations. It was phased out of USAF service in 1958. Many survive and are often seen at air shows.

44. Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird (Reconnaissance)...Designed by "Kelly" Johnson and Lockheed's "Skunk Works"; the Blackbird was designed to look at the earth from over 80,000 feet and to fly fast (over Mach 3.3 or 2,350 mph). One flew from Los Angeles to Washington, D. C. in 64 minutes, 5 seconds, at an average speed of 2,153mph. Our aircraft flew the most operational missions of any SR-71. It was the first to fly over Vietnam and it flew photo reconnaissance over Libya in 1986. Thirty two were built and served from 1964 to 1990. They were based at Beale AFB, CA, on Okinawa and in the UK. Though they were shot at over 1,000 times, none was ever lost to hostile fire. The SR-71 was retired in 1990, but three were refurbished and returned to service in 1995 and again retired at the end of 1997.

BRIGADIER GENERAL FREDERICK W. CASTLE
1908-1944

Castle Air Force Base located in Atwater, California was named in honor of Brigadier General Frederick W. Castle. General Castle earned a Medal of Honor posthumously for his actions while leading a 2,000 aircraft bomber formation over Europe on December 24, 1944. General Castle was born October 14, 1908, in Manila, Philippines. After serving two years in the New Jersey National Guard he attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. After graduating from the Academy in June 1930 he was assigned to the Air Corps for flight training at March Field, California, and Kelly Field, Texas and completed his training in October 1931.

General Castle served as a pilot and Assistant Operations Officer with the 17th Pursuit Squadron at Selfridge Field, Michigan, until February 1934 when he resigned and returned to civilian life, holding reserve status with the New York National Guard.

Reentering active service in January 1942, General Castle was one of eight officers selected to accompany Major General Ira Eaker to England to form the Eighth Air Force.

Promoted to Colonel he took command of the 94th Bomb Group and in April 1944 he became the commanding officer of the 4th Combat Bomb Wing. He led many combat missions, including a mission to Regensburg and in November 1944 he was promoted to brigadier general.

On December 24, 1944, on his 30th bombing mission, General Castle was killed while leading an air division of B-17s over Liege, Belgium. En route to the target his plane lost an engine, forcing him to drop from the lead of the formation and his aircraft was then attacked by German fighters. Since he was flying over friendly troops on the ground General Castle refused to jettison his bombs to gain speed. All of the crew except General Castle and the pilot were able to escape before the plane exploded.

His Medal of Honor citation reads, in part, ""...Repeated attacks started fires in two engines ... realizing the hopelessness of the situation, the bail-out order was given. Without regard for his personal safety he gallantly remained at the controls to afford other crewmembers an opportunity to escape. Still another attack exploded gasoline tanks ... and the bomber plunged earthward carrying General Castle to his death. His intrepidity and willing sacrifice of his life to save members of the crew were in keeping with the highest traditions of military service."

His military awards and decorations include the Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, Legion of Merit, the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross with three oak leaf clusters, and the Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters.